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# Child Language Brokering in School: Final Research Report



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 A note on terminology

There are a variety of terms used by official agencies, professionals and researchers in this field. We begin by listing the main terms we have used in this report for people who are involved in translating for others in schools and explaining how we have used them.

### *Language Broker*

The terms “language broker” (LB) and “child language broker” (CLB) are regularly used here in place of “interpreter” or “translator”. We describe children and adults as being language brokers when they act as an agent for one party in a conversation. A professional interpreter is independent, impersonal and detached; a *language broker* is there to support someone (just as a finance broker, theoretically at least, is supposed to protect the interests of their client). Parents will often look to their children to act as language brokers on their behalf. Language brokers are likely to go beyond the words that are spoken when they think the listener needs that. They may offer explanations of what is said and act as intermediaries between the main parties, e.g. explaining a school’s expectations or routines to parents or parents’ cultural concerns to teachers.

In this report we are mainly concerned with children who undertake this role, but it is important to note that adults may assist in these situations too. Adults may be invited to act as brokers by the family or the school. Those invited by the parents may be members of the extended family, neighbours or friends. Those invited by the school may be from a network of community organisations known to the school (e.g. a local church or mosque). They are likely to be familiar with the local community of which they and the parents are part.

### *Professional Interpreters and translators*

A school may call on a *professional interpreter or translator* for whose services payment will normally be required. The organisations in local authorities and voluntary agencies that employ such interpreters will expect them to meet set standards of knowledge and skill. They will be committed to conveying what is said between people faithfully, accurately and impartially and will have contractual obligations regarding confidentiality. Local *Community Interpreters* may have a good knowledge of the language groups they work with in the area.

*Bilingual Teachers and teaching assistants*

Schools may call on members of their own staff for support. In some circumstances a *bilingual teacher or teaching assistant* may be willing to act as an interpreter on a voluntary basis, or where they hold a defined liaison role in the school this may be part of their job description. They will not normally be subject to the kind of code of professional conduct that covers many professional interpreters, but they will have the advantage of knowing the school at first hand.

## **1.2 Background**

Family life is changing fast, and school practices are not evolving to keep up with these changes (Cline, Crafter, de Abreu, and O'Dell, 2009). This small scale study aims to contribute to the evolution of policy and practice in an area of particularly rapid change in many countries. There is substantial family migration into and across Europe, which has been enhanced in the UK by the opening up of the labour market to nationals from the A8 countries. This no longer affects only inner-city areas, as some new workers settle in rural areas where schools have had less experience in the past of working with immigrant families. One of the challenges the teachers and parents often face is the lack of a shared language for communicating about the school's expectations and the children's needs. Few schools have access to professional interpreting facilities across the range of home languages spoken by their parents, and only limited use can be made of bilingual teaching and support staff for interpreting. Because children often learn the host language much more quickly than their parents, increasing numbers of children and young people contribute to family life by acting as child language brokers for their parents.

In surveys in urban areas of the USA most children of immigrants have reported that they have translated for a family member at least once in the past (e.g. Tse, 1996), that they usually started brokering when they were between 8 and 12 years old (McQuillan & Tse, 1995) and that it was usually daughters who took on the role (Weisskirch, 2005), doing so for mothers to a greater extent than for other family members (Dorner, Orellana and Li-Grining, 2007). There have been no similar studies in the United Kingdom. In studies of the children of immigrants, young respondents have incidentally reported acting as brokers in an everyday capacity such as making phone calls, (Dorner, Orellana and Li-Grining, 2007), translating mail, newspapers and television (Villanueva & Buriel, 2010). More diverse and potentially sensitive brokering situations have included visits to general practitioners and school meetings (Abreu et al. 2004), a fire inspector's visit to take-away food premises (Hall and Sham 1998), the arrangement of a hire purchase agreement in a shop (Free et al. 2003), negotiating a drink-driving event with police on behalf of a father (Kwon, 2013)

and phoning a government office to protest about a deportation order on the child's father (Candappa 2000). A study with GPs across London also found evidence of children acting as interpreters for family members (Cohen, Moran-Ellis & Smaje, 1999). Children have also reported acting in this capacity for other adult relatives, family friends, neighbours, fellow students at school and even strangers in the street (Kaur and Mills 1993; Abreu and Lambert 2003). A survey in which we were involved suggested that the practice is not uncommon (O'Dell et al., 2006). A large sample of students aged 15-18 years in the South of England were surveyed on the subject of their engagement in "work". One of the 32 jobs they were invited to list as something they did "regularly" was "translating for an adult". 6.6% of the sample (n=1002) ticked this box. It should be noted, however, that respondents were not given a specific definition of language brokering to work from, so it is likely that they interpreted the concept more widely than studies that have focused specifically on this activity alone such as Dorner et al. (2007).

Surveys in the USA have indicated that CLBs translate notes and letters from school for their parents more often than any other documents (Weisskirch, 2005), and when they interpret for them in face-to-face meetings, school is one of the most frequent venues where this takes place (Tse, 1995, 1996). However, CLB research in this country has given most attention to language brokering in medical settings, exploring the perspectives of GPs, primary care nurses and CLBs themselves (e.g. Gerrish et al, 2004). Reports of CLB activity at school have been anecdotal (Kaur and Mills, 1993) or have focused on the CLB perspective (Hall and Sham, 2007) or the process of translation (Hall, 2001). While preparing a recent review of the literature (Cline et al, 2010), we noted that there have been no studies here of the frequency of reliance on CLB activities in urban schools and no studies of teachers' professional perspectives on these activities or of the views of students who had undertaken CLB while at school about their experiences in that setting.

At various times there has been some official support for schemes in which bilingual students were trained to act as interpreters for other students' parents at national level (QCA, 2008) and local level (Hampshire, 2014), but there is no official guidance on the more common practice of using students to translate on behalf of their own families when the conversation with teachers is about their own or a sibling's school progress. We were not able to trace any explicit school policy statements or Ofsted observations on the practice. It is not covered in initial teacher education. To some extent that reflects an ambivalent attitude to the practice that permeates professional and academic commentary on the subject of second-language use and bilingualism more generally. On the one hand, there is well-founded professional resistance to the use of children in the LB role

in sensitive or challenging meetings. Like other non-professional interpreters they are likely to make mistakes in their translations (Flores et al. 2003). This may occur for many reasons, for example when technical words or key features of a situation are misunderstood. The responsibility placed on the broker may be stressful and excessive, and they may lose time at school (Morales and Hansen, 2005). Some commentators have advocated that children should never be used as language brokers in school settings (e.g. Linse, 2011). This view is endorsed by many other professionals who have been surveyed, especially when sensitive or confidential matters are to be discussed, e.g. in nursing (Gerrish, Chau, Sobowale and Birks, 2004), social work (Chand, 2005) and psychology (BPS, 2008).

On the other hand, some surveys of those directly involved suggest support for a more pragmatic approach that allows for the use of CLBs in relatively straightforward consultations when that is the wish of the family (Cohen et al, 1999). It is in fact well documented that for some purposes many immigrant parents and grandparents prefer a language broker from within their own family to an external professional interpreter (Rhodes and Nocon, 2003), though this is certainly not a universal view (Gerrish et al, 2004). Those who were in favour of using family language brokers saw them as more accessible when you need them (Free et al, 1999; Abreu and Lambert, 2003), more likely to understand exactly what their relative requires (Free et al, 2003) and more likely to respect family confidentiality (Cohen et al, 1999). With their child as interpreter parents may feel that they can retain more control over the conversation, having some appreciation of the extent and limits of the child's understanding of the language and the situation and being able to interrogate them more closely about what is being said when they feel that is necessary (Hall, Sham and Robinson, 1990). Thus surveys of parents and other professionals do not offer a clear set of conclusions on which schools may base policies that are likely to enjoy consensual support, but the research evidence on CLB activity in other settings suggests that there are complex and controversial issues to be resolved. The first aim of the study was to provide the evidence basis for more carefully articulated support for good practice in schools. For this purpose investigating the views of teachers and young adults who had experience of acting as a CLB when at school appeared particularly pertinent. As noted above, these two groups have been largely ignored in previous CLB research in this country.

An additional reason for conducting research that focused specifically on the school setting was that the concerns that have been expressed about the use of CLBs in this context are different from those listed in relation to medical and legal settings. In a doctor's surgery or a lawyer's office the children act unequivocally as brokers on behalf of their family. They do not purport to be detached or independent in the sense that a professional interpreter would aspire to be, but are



seen to be working actively to support the family's interests and are partly trusted by their parents for that reason. Therefore, the family members have been portrayed as working together as a team whilst maintaining 'appropriate' parent/child boundaries. For example, the parents are described as seeing "themselves as retaining their parental roles", and the young people as seeing themselves to be "simply carrying out tasks that may more appropriately be thought of as analogous to specialised 'household chores'." (Valdés et al., 2003, p. 96)

Language brokering at school is a different situation in which the interests of parents and child may not always be aligned in the same way. For example, Kaur and Mills (1993) reported on a child who made out that a school report was better than it was, while Hall & Sham (2007) described a child altering notes to the school written by her father. In that case the child did not want her teachers to know that she worked in the family's "chippy"<sup>1</sup> each day after school. However, the process may not always involve a child improving on the picture presented in a report or a note. Sánchez et al. (2006) analysed in detail how some of the Mexican-American children in their sample consistently downgraded their teachers' praise during parent-teacher conferences. The authors' explanations for this unexpected finding were limited by the design of their study, which did not include a post-conference interview with the students. In a study of adults who had acted as language brokers during their school days Bauer (2013) analysed their explanations of what had led them to "edit" information sometimes during school parents' evenings. Some described this as being borne out of self-interest (not wanting to get into trouble with their parents), whilst others sought to protect their parents from worries and concerns.

What is clear, however, is that when language brokering takes place at school, parents and children may have different concerns and interests, so that the dynamics of the meeting can become very complex. This may arise particularly when the child is translating in a meeting that concerns their own future or their own problems. An additional factor is that their parents may have a quite limited understanding of the school setting (e.g. over the implications of different choices of GCSE subject), or they may not appreciate what is expected of them in the situation (e.g. when they have experienced schooling themselves in which parental involvement was minimal). The children, on the other hand, will be more familiar with the curricular and organisational issues that are discussed, and they may find the concepts and language more accessible. But this is the child's territory, and they will have to go on interacting with others there long after the CLB episode is over. They may find their parents' visit to the school and their involvement in it an embarrassing reminder of the differences between them and many of their

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<sup>1</sup> A family-run take-away catering business selling fish and chips

peers. The extent of that embarrassment is likely to depend on how far that practice is shared by others in the school and how the adults they translate for treat them. In this study we aimed to investigate these processes through the eyes of the stakeholders who have experienced them most closely.

### 1.3 Aims and research questions

The primary aim of the project was to provide an evidence basis for more sensitive and effective practice and more carefully articulated school policies on the use of pupils as language brokers for their own parents and others in school. To this end we investigated and triangulated the views and experiences of two groups who we expected to bring distinctive and complementary perspectives to the topic - teachers in schools in multilingual areas and young adults who had acted as language brokers in the course of their own school career (ex-CLBs<sup>2</sup>). The study addressed the following research questions in relation to both groups:

1. How often and for what purposes are CLBs used in schools?
2. To what degree are CLBs used in routine contacts with parents (their own & those of others), in more sensitive discussions about vulnerable pupils (e.g. about SEN) and in discussions when crucial matters are being resolved (e.g. planning for subject choices in Year 10)?
3. What are the perceived advantages and disadvantages of school language brokering arrangements?
4. How do teachers and ex-CLBs perceive CLBs in terms of their alignment with family or personal interests as against detached, independent values of translation and interpreting?
5. What views do ex-CLBs now have of their experience of the process, their own agency, competence and effectiveness and how the process was facilitated or obstructed by the actions and attitudes of their teachers?
6. What differences of view and understanding are there between teachers who are themselves bilingual or multilingual, teachers who are monolingual and ex-CLBs?
7. What recommendations would current teachers and ex-CLBs make on how to improve schools' policies and practices on CLB activity?

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<sup>2</sup> We describe these young people as “ex-CLBS” to make it clear that this report focuses on what they did in the past at school. Many of them, of course, may still have been acting as language brokers for families as adults, but our interviews did not focus on this more recent activity.

## 2. Methods

To address the research questions listed above and provide an evidence base for the development of guidance for schools we collected data from two groups, teachers and ex-CLBs. For each group the study involved two phases, an on-line survey followed by an interview study that explored detailed questions in greater depth with a small number of selected respondents. Parallel topics that relate to the research questions above were covered with each group. The online survey tool used was the Bristol Online Survey tool (BOS), which supports the development, deployment and analysis of survey information.

### 2.1 Recruitment and sampling<sup>3</sup>

#### (a) *Teachers*

The teachers were recruited through letters and emails to head teachers of schools with a significant number of pupils with EAL on roll (as recorded by the Department for Education for School Performance Tables). Priority was given initially to schools in areas where there was a record of high recent immigration. All schools that met the criteria were approached in 20 local authorities in the London area and 40 outside London (including metropolitan areas across all the English regions and counties in the East Midlands and the South East). Head teachers were offered an incentive for their school to participate in the form of the promise of a contribution of £100 to their school fund in return for the receipt of five completed questionnaires from teachers who regularly participate in meetings with parents at their school plus, if we requested it, one teacher participating in a detailed follow up interview. A group of the participating teachers were also asked at a later stage for feedback comments on an outline of draft conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the project in an end of project stakeholder conference day. The recruitment process for the survey took much longer than we had anticipated because of a low response rate to initial invitations. This sample represents staff working in schools where there was a relatively high level of interest in (and probably experience of) child language brokering.

The final sample of teachers comprised 63 respondents for the online survey (12 of whom were male) and 12 respondents for the interview phase (two of whom were male). 34 teachers were aged 24-40 and 29 aged 41-60. All of them had at least one year's teaching experience with

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<sup>3</sup> In this report all names of those who were interviewed are pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

almost half the survey sample having taught for over ten years. In terms of their status and duties in school the three largest groups within the sample comprised:

- Class teachers in primary schools and subject teachers in secondary schools
- Coordinators and teachers of English as an additional language (EAL)
- Staff with Head of Year, Senior Management Team and other senior responsibilities

It may show a bias in general interest among teachers in this topic that over a third of those who completed the survey themselves had parents who had been born overseas and over a third had been born overseas themselves. Their countries of birth included:

- UK (39)
- Rest of Europe (12)
- Africa (4)
- Caribbean and South America (4)
- South and East Asia (3)
- Australia (1)

Just under half of the teachers reported that they spoke at least one other language besides English fluently.

The 12 teachers who were interviewed had a largely similar overall profile, though their average age was a little older. 10 were female, and 8 were in the age range 41-50 years. Using the UK Census categories, 10 reported their ethnic background as White British or White European, 1 as African Caribbean and 1 as Chinese. 8 worked in secondary schools and 2 in primary schools. In terms of their status and duties in school the sample comprised:

- 4 subject/class teachers
- 5 EAL coordinators and teachers
- 2 staff with Head of Department or Senior Management Team responsibilities
- 1 teaching assistant.

On the basis of their accounts of their fluency in different languages we judged that 3 members of the sample were bilingual or multilingual and 9 were monolingual in English.

#### *(b) Ex-Child Language Brokers*

Ex-CLBs were recruited from two universities in the East Midlands and two in London. Each site was chosen because it had a suitable student population with a high proportion of students from ethnic and linguistic minority communities. Posters were placed on noticeboards, adverts put on virtual learning environments and some lecturers advertised the research at the beginning of

foundation lectures. Two of the teacher interviewees introduced us to language brokers who were about to leave their schools. The Young Interpreter network also facilitated a link to a teacher in a college in the South East. The researchers also wrote to heads of 429 supplementary and complementary schools in London, the South East and East Midlands. The final sample of ex-CLBS for the online survey comprised 25 respondents, four of whom were male, and 21 female. Ages ranged from 16-26 years. Two respondents were omitted from the study because they did not meet the age criteria set by the team, being 41 and 45 years respectively. We made the decision to focus on 'young adults' so that participants' recollections of their experiences of brokering in school were recent.

For the interviews 14 students (4 of whom were male) participated and were offered a £10 gift voucher for their time. Their countries of origin included Austria, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Iceland, Lithuania, Nepal, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Turkey, Venezuela and the UK. Just over half reported that they had translated for others before the age of 11. However, translating for their parents in school was generally more common at the secondary stage: 60% of the young people reported that they had translated for their parents in primary school sometimes or often, a figure that rose to 88% for secondary school.

The interviews were conducted by Sarah Crafter (who met the ex-CLBs) and Evangelia Prokopiou (who met the teachers). The ex-CLBs who were interviewed fell into two groups, those who had left school and were currently studying at university or working (4 participants aged 20-26 years plus one who did not give her age) and those who were still in their final years of school (9 participants aged 16-18). The home languages spoken by their families included:

Bengali (2)	Pashto
Dutch	Portuguese (2)
Farsi (2)	Spanish (3)
German	Twi
Italian	Urdu
Nepalese (4)	

Five reported that they had spoken more than one language other than English at home. For example, one young woman used both Dutch and Twi within her family, having migrated to the UK from Ghana via the Netherlands. Another used Spanish with her parents and siblings but Portuguese with a grandfather. One young woman had been born in Germany but her parents were from Turkey.

## 2.2 Materials

### (a) *The online survey*

There were separate questionnaires for teachers and ex-CLBs with some deliberate repetition between them. For example, both surveys explored the frequency of CLB use in schools and the purposes for which it is used. We borrowed some questions from existing scales such as the Language Broker Survey from Los Angeles (Tse, 1996) and the Culture Broker Scale from Maryland (Jones and Trickett, 2005). We asked about participants' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of school language brokering arrangements, CLBs' alignment with family or personal interests and views on how to improve schools' policies and practices on CLB activity. For these a combination of structured vignette-based questions and open-ended questions were developed, building on our experience of the use of these question types in earlier studies (Cline et al., 2002; O'Dell et al., 2006). The vignette-based questions were presented in a multiple-choice format. For example, one scenario read: 'Mohammed and his parents operated like a team together when he was translating for them at school'. Ex-CLBs were asked to rate whether 'that was very (or quite) like I used to be' and teachers whether 'that is like some (or most) of those I have observed'. A full list of the questions in both schedules may be found in the Research Report section of the project website.

### (b) *The interview schedule*

The interviews were conducted using a narrative-episodic approach developed by Flick (2000). This approach seeks to explore narrative-episodic and semantic knowledge. Episodic knowledge is relevant to specific experiences and situations whilst semantic knowledge is based on representations and assumptions, abstracted from these experiences. The interview schedule, which was developed on the basis of initial findings from the survey, explored detailed questions about CLB activities in schools in greater depth. As with the survey questionnaire, the interview schedule contained many parallel topics that were covered with both teachers and ex-CLBs. Respondents were asked to recount a situation of language brokering either with a parent or peer, to describe how this was arranged, the reactions of the people involved, the impact on relationships, and issues related to language skills and emotional responses to the situation. Both groups were asked about the advantages and disadvantages of language brokering in school and were invited to suggest recommendations that they thought would help to improve practice in schools. In addition, some questions were developed for each group separately. For example, the interviews with ex-CLBs explored their experience of the process, their own agency, competence and effectiveness and how the process was facilitated or obstructed by the actions and attitudes of their teachers.

### **2.3 Analysing the data**

The analysis was partly quantitative, designed to develop a typical profile of CLB activities for individuals and schools. Responses to open-ended questions in the survey were examined using content analysis to make group comparisons possible. The qualitative data was subjected to theoretical coding as suggested by Flick (2006). This is a form of thematic analysis that utilises the research questions and theoretical approach as its basis. Procedurally we followed the steps of the Framework Approach outlined by Pope et al. (2000). There was an ongoing iterative process in which successive stages of coding were informed by a regular review of the pre-determined research questions. The interviews were transcribed and coded separately and then crosschecked. Cross-case analysis then investigated patterns across the data, which were grouped together according to themes and related to the key research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **2.4 Developing the guidance material**

A key aim of the project was to use the findings and the recommendations for practice to develop practice guidance for schools. This endeavor was greatly enhanced by establishing an external Advisory Group from the early planning stages of the project. This group was made up of experienced urban teachers, young adults with experience of CLB in schools, and research colleagues with expertise in the area. Members met in the early stages of the project and were also invited to comment on the survey and interview materials at a later stage. Some of our advisory group members, teacher respondents, colleagues from language networks, and others researching in this field attended a day conference at the end of the project to feed back on a draft of the practice guidance for schools. Their comments were recorded and taken into account during the production of the final draft.

### 3. Findings

For this report findings from the survey and interview datasets were triangulated to address each of the research questions that had been set out for the project at the outset. The survey explicitly covered situations in which children translated for their own parents. When interpreting the tables based on survey findings below, readers should keep in mind the total numbers on which percentages were calculated ( $n = 63$  for teachers and  $n = 25$  for ex-CLBs).

During the interviews many teachers and ex-CLBs chose to talk about the different situation in which a child acts as a “Young Interpreter” translating for other children’s parents or relatives. Where the findings below relate to Young Interpreters, this is made explicit.

#### 3.1 Frequency and purposes of CLB use in schools.

The first research question that we considered was - how often and for what purposes are CLBs used in schools?

##### *How often?*

Our survey focused on schools where teachers and ex-pupils volunteered that they had had experience of the practice. 27% of the teachers in these schools reported that they had “often” experienced a pupil translating in school for their parents who could not speak English and 60% reported that this had happened “sometimes”. This cannot, of course, form the basis of an estimate of how frequently child language brokering occurs in schools nationally.

##### *For what purposes?*

Both groups of respondents were asked to indicate the circumstances in which pupils had acted as CLBs in school in their experience. Table 1 below shows the proportion of each group who reported that the most common situations occurred “often” or “sometimes” (and not “rarely” or “never”). It will be seen that the largest discrepancy in responses was that translating letters sent home by the school was more salient for pupils than for teachers.

In addition, individual teachers recalled pupils:



- Contributing as members of a student interview panel during the selection process for bilingual Teaching Assistants
- Translating for the parents of other children during informal conversations, e.g. explaining procedures to newly arrived parents
- Making phone calls home to parents about health, behaviour, parents' evenings, etc.
- Interpreting for a sibling during a first language assessment
- Mediating when there were playground arguments
- Translating letters for local primary schools

Ex-CLBs indicated that, in addition, they had undertaken language brokering in other settings such as DSS and mortgage brokers' offices and health care settings including hospitals and GP surgeries. In connection with school, individuals reported that, for example, "usually after the formal meeting I would have to explain fully to my mother what it was about". There were also occasional episodes of full language brokering in school. One example was when "my grandmother visited us from Pakistan and during this visit had to collect me early from primary school one day due to a fall I had".

**Table 1** *In what circumstances did students translate at school?*

		<b>Teachers report</b>	<b>Ex-CLBs report</b>
Formal meetings of teacher and parents	Often/sometimes	81%	96%
Informal meetings of teacher and parents	Often/sometimes	61%	74%
For new pupil from overseas	Often/sometimes	81%	70%
Letters sent home	Often/sometimes	48%	83%
Meetings with Head Teacher involving my parent (ex-CLBs only)	Often/sometimes		61%
Meetings with Teaching Assistant involving my parent (ex-CLBs only)	Often/sometimes		55%
Discussions with reception/secretarial staff involving my parent (ex-CLBs only)	Often/sometimes		64%

i Percentages in all tables have been rounded to whole numbers.

The survey data thus alerted us to an unsurprising difference between teachers and ex-CLBs in their perceptions of the phenomenon. The teachers' reports of language brokering focused almost

entirely on school-based episodes, highlighting those instances that had occurred on school premises or had been directly organised by the school. The ex-CLBs, on the other hand, gave more attention to the language brokering they undertook outside school, including the translation of letters sent home by the school.

The interviews confirmed the results from the survey, indicating that the majority of ex-CLBs had brokered for their own parents at school, either at meetings about themselves or at meetings about their siblings:

*Yes, you know we have like parents evening, every time I have to translate for my mum. So it's like either it was my parents evening or my brother's, then I go with her and then what the teacher says I just translate it to her in Twi, which is like a Ghanaian dialect.... So basically every parents evening, anything that my mum has to meet the teachers for as well, yeah.*  
(Angelica)

Ex-CLBs who were interviewed also described situations that were not directly covered in the survey. Within the family they might broker for their parents when the focus of discussion was a younger sibling. Outside the family they might help with phone calls to parents of other children on routine matters relating to their child. In addition, they might be called to the school reception area to broker between the parents of another pupil and a member of school staff. Anamika, who speaks Bengali, described one such incident:

*OK, so two days ago there was a incident with a little boy, he's in year 9, he had to call his mum and so his mum can speak English but it wasn't enough to understand all the like good words and stuff. So they had to call me so I went there and I translated. His mum was quite all right but she needed a little bit of support as well and she got a little bit emotional as well so we had to just kind of support her and yeah, yeah, it was all right.*

Both teachers and ex-CLBs referred to their acting as 'buddies' in the classroom to newly arrived pupils. Schools with a formal *Young Interpreters* scheme in place had clear guidelines for how this should be managed, but in other schools what were intended to be short-term arrangements were sometimes not monitored and continued for much longer than expected. Thus Celia, an ex-CLB who spoke Spanish and another European language, reported:

*In year 8 there was a girl from Colombia who came to our country school for the first time and she was going to join the school permanently but she didn't speak a word of English so I had to, so I had to sit next to her in all her lessons to translate from Spanish to English and English to Spanish. And I personally felt I benefited from it because in a way I was practising my Spanish but in a way it was also quite, not hard but like it was hard for me to concentrate on my*

*work and do hers at the same time... [They became friends but the informal arrangement continued through to the end of the next school year.] ...I was ok with it at first because I thought it's something new, I've never really tried it for a friend and I figured it was a way for me to also to like make the new person feel safe because I know it, I know what it's like to be in the position where you don't understand people around you. And it was, it was all right but it got a bit tricky towards the end because we'd end up having the same homework, the same class work and then eventually it just became quite tiring.*

### **3.2 The use of CLBs when sensitive matters or crucial decisions are discussed**

The second research question was - to what degree are CLBs used in routine contacts with parents (their own & those of others), in more sensitive discussions about vulnerable pupils (e.g. about SEN) and in discussions when crucial matters are being resolved (e.g. planning for subject choices in Year 10)?

There was general acceptance of the principle that children should not be asked to translate for the parents when very serious or sensitive matters were being discussed. However, 44% of the teachers in the survey and 60% of the ex-CLBs recalled situations when this had happened. There was some variation between individuals and groups on their evaluation of what constituted a very serious or sensitive matter. For example, it appeared that the ex-CLBs judged a wider range of topics to be very serious or sensitive than the teachers did. Thus, as can be seen in Table 2, when they were asked to recall an occasion when a child had been asked to translate for their parents at school on a very sensitive or serious matter, a teacher gave the example of a child's exclusion from school while an ex-CLB remembered when they had been in trouble and the school wanted to move them into another form group. As in the case of letters being translated at home, episodes outside the school were inevitably more salient for the ex-CLBs than for the teachers, e.g. "Home Office stuff" and a health issue.

**Table 2 Examples each group gave of “a very serious or sensitive matter”**

Teachers	Ex-CLBs
Inappropriate behaviour	Child behaviour, personal problems
Child's exclusion	When I was in trouble at school and the school wanted me to move into another form group.
Explaining option subjects to parents/students to help them make appropriate choices; subject choices for GCSE	Picking GCSEs and A-levels; planning for subject choices; I had to translate words to my parents about going to college, informing them what subjects am I doing and why etc; subject choices for both me and my siblings
Filling in secondary transfer forms; moving school or house	Change of schools
Safeguarding issues	Domestic violence issues at home
Issues with non attendance	
For being bullied in school	
	Home office stuff
	It was about a health issue

During the interview phase of the study it was possible to explore the principles behind these judgments in more detail. While some subjects such as domestic violence could be seen to be inappropriate for CLB involvement under all circumstances, there were other occasions when the risks were less obvious and the concerns more nuanced. Interviewees identified process as well as content issues when trying to articulate anxieties they had had about some of their experiences with CLB in the past. It was clear from some ex-CLBs that the principles they and the teachers described had not always been followed. Ines, an ex-CLB, whose family life had gone through a traumatic phase, said:

*I felt like I was exposed to things that I wouldn't expose my own 7 year old to, no way.*

Table 3 outlines some of the key issues they raised and indicates the basis of their concerns by outlining incidents they described in this phase of the interview.

**Table 3 Deciding whether or not to use a CLB or Young Interpreter in school**

<p>Would the content of the meeting be disturbing:</p>	
<p>1. For any child? (e.g. safeguarding matters, the need for referral for specialist assessment)</p>	<p><i>I translated for my mum at the police station. At the time my mum was with somebody where there was domestic violence and instead of them sort of getting somebody to come in and translate, they would use me. And so being at a police station and having to have my mum in tears, crying and telling them about what happened, you know ... So instead they would just ask me to do it so it was, it was awkward because I was living it but I was also having to live it sort of through my mum kind of way because I'd have to translate for them and I even got to go to Court as well with my mum. And I, I don't know, I never questioned why they never got a translator, I just sort of did what I was told. (Inês, ex-CLB)</i></p>
<p>2. For this child for personal reasons? (e.g. emotional difficulties, personal hygiene concerns)</p>	<p><i>...like something to do with their personal hygiene that you don't want to embarrass the child by saying but you need to relay it to the parent that, that there is a problem. (Nicole, teacher)</i></p> <p><i>If the child has got problems of, I don't know, emotional issues, I wouldn't say can you ask your parents in and you tell your parents that you've got emotional issues, I don't think it's workable. (Phoebe, teacher)</i></p>
<p>3. For this child for family reasons? (e.g. where there are known to be family tensions that involve the child)</p>	<p><i>Using an older sibling isn't always appropriate either, you know, because again that, there's a whole lot of things that goes on in families that we're not aware of necessarily and we don't want to exacerbate any, any sort of power struggles or, or whatever might be going on that hasn't necessarily been passed back to us. (Emma, teacher)</i></p>
<p>4. For this child in relation to their peers at school?</p>	<p><i>Once there was a boy who, who spoke Farsi language where it is from our country so I do understand that language. So that student, his behaviour was not good in school at all... On Parents Evening the parents were there and then he was there as well. So when I was translating it for them so mainly bad points and then he was there and I was translating so he was having a bad thing of me, like why is she saying whatever the teacher is saying and you're saying exactly the same thing to the mum and dad. Because he was, he was feeling bad in a way that this truth is coming out. (Mina, ex-CLB)</i></p>
<p>5. For this child in relation to school staff</p>	<p><i>It's quite hard when they are like against a teacher... like one student was saying I don't like this teacher, I don't like the way he teach, so it's quite hard to say this translation to you because I have to translate it. So that could be quite awkward but I do say it, well it's, you know, kind of negative things about the staff and I'm like kind of young to say that. (Anamika, ex-CLB)</i></p>

It is not always possible to anticipate the way a meeting will go, and what may appear to be a straightforward judgment can prove wrong. For example, a parent may bring up an unexpected issue such as bullying. When they and the teacher are communicating directly, the meeting can easily be diverted to focus on the problem, but when the child who is the focus of concern is acting as language broker, that may be more difficult to negotiate, especially if the child's agenda differs from the parent's.

*I had a Portuguese girl in my class last year... and her mother, during the Parents Evening, said to me, was trying to say to me that Maria was being teased in the class. She was a very tall girl, she had beautiful curly hair and it was always done really lovely, beautifully, but the other girls were quite jealous and instead of saying she was tall they used to say she was fat and things like that. So the mum was trying to, Maria had never told me that she was being teased, she was always very happy and smiley in class, so the mother was bringing it up with me. But that was quite a sensitive issue, the fact that I'd never heard that Joanna was being bullied, there were no tell-tale signs that she was being bullied in school but the mum was having to bring it to me. So even if that was an English speaker speaking to me I would have been very, you know, shocked and everything, but she was trying to say it in broken English and then Maria was like trying to tell her mum in Portuguese, 'no mum it's not that bad', and things like that. But obviously it was because she told her at home. So I think that, then, when you're talking about something really sensitive, that was, that was very hard... and I wanted to reassure the mother that everything would be all right and I'd do everything in my power to be, to sort things out. But I'm not sure how much of that she was understanding... I think she (Maria) was embarrassed and she was trying to play it down and say that her mum, to her mum, 'no no it's not that bad', so that I, because the worst thing for a child is if they're being bullied they tell an adult and then an adult pulls those bullies up and goes. Maria's told me this, and I think that's what she was so scared of. I think maybe she was embarrassed but also a bit scared of what was going to happen... she was kind of doing it both ways so she was saying to her mum that it wasn't that bad and then if her mum needed a word then Maria was saying it to me but Joanna's English wasn't fantastic so we had all sorts of problems. But the next time they came in for the Parents' Evening I think her mum's friend or it was an aunt who came in with her who had much better English and they'd obviously talked about the, the, some points beforehand so that they were very prepared when they came in, that this is what we want to talk about, and the aunt said it and then was able to translate for the mum. So that was better. (Nicole, teacher)*

All accepted an overarching principle that the child should have a choice in whether they acted as translator or not, though it was not always honoured. That decision was sometimes made by the family rather than the school. Amita was from a Nepalese family. Her father spoke English but her mother did not.

*When it's like Parents Evening in college or in school I always take my dad but it was my, that time my dad was at work so literally my dad asked mum to go with me because there was no-one at home because everybody had to work so no matter what, I had to take my mum, my dad ordered me. I was like 'oh why, why can't I just go by myself' and he was 'no you have to take your parents' because that's what it was, to bring your parents, so my dad was just like 'just take your mum and it's ok'. But I was like 'no I don't want to' and he was like 'why not, just because your mum don't like speak English doesn't mean you don't have to take her, like you're not going to take her'. I was like 'well that's true' so I have to take her, no matter what, because it's my dad, I have to follow what he says, so.*

When there was pressure from teachers it was less direct and took the form of explaining to the child why it was important to have a translator in a particular situation. Celia, whose buddying dilemma was described above felt that she was under a moral obligation, although no one made that explicit. Two friends who were also asked to help had less fluent Spanish and opted out.

*The teacher said that I could do it for as long as I wanted. But the thing is, it wouldn't have really been fair for me to leave her half-way and then she's there still not understanding. So I kind of, it was sort of voluntary in a way.*

This kind of “voluntary” arrangement is easier to manage when a school has formal guidelines on good practice.

### 3.3 Perceived advantages and disadvantages of school LB arrangements

The third research question was - what are the perceived advantages and disadvantages of school language brokering arrangements? We wished to learn how direct stakeholders in child language brokering at school perceived the advantages and disadvantages of the arrangements they had experienced. Much commentary on these issues has been based on conclusions drawn by researchers, service managers and commentators who were not themselves directly involved (e.g. Linse, 2011). The question was addressed in the online survey. Claims that have been made in the literature were encapsulated in a series of statements that are listed in Table 4. Much of this literature concerned child language brokering in other settings such doctors' surgeries and hospitals. So we added new items relating to the role schools play in promoting their pupils' learning and social development. The table indicates the proportion of respondents in each group who indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

**Table 4 Perceived advantages and disadvantages of school language brokering arrangements<sup>i</sup>**

<i>Perceived advantages</i>		
<b>Statement set out in the survey questionnaire</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Ex-CLBs</b>
Parents prefer this arrangement to having a professional interpreter or a member of the school staff acting as translator	45%	68%
Children tend to prefer this arrangement to having a professional interpreter or a member of the school staff acting as translator (ex-CLB only)	-	44%
It is better to keep things within the family	48%	46%
The child understands what their parents already know and what they need extra explanation about	64%	83%
The child learns both languages better	50%	50%
The child comes to understand both cultures better	50%	50%
The child learns social and communication skills	77%	67%



<i>Perceived disadvantages</i>		
	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Ex-CLBs</b>
Young people may not know one of the languages well enough so that they make translation errors	69%	68%
Young people may not know technical school words well enough so that they make translation errors (ex-CLB only)	-	58%
The meeting may cover sensitive issues so that the child or the parents may be embarrassed	85%	88%
The child may not want their parents to know about some negative things at school so that they deliberately play down what a teacher has said	77%	88%
The child may feel it is inappropriate to say boastful things about themselves so that they do not translate accurately when teachers praise them or describe their best achievements	51%	67%
Translating at school for their family may impose excessive responsibilities on children so that they feel stressed or anxious	55%	67%
Translating at school may take up children's time that would better be spent on other things	44%	46%
The translator is in a position of power because no one else understands everything that is being said. That gives children too much power in relation to their parents	44%	46%

<sup>i</sup> Proportion of respondents who responded 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to the statements

For most of the statements the proportions of teachers and ex-CLBs expressing agreement with what is said are broadly comparable. However, there were some statements were supported by more ex-CLBs than teachers. These tended to be statements that highlighted the perspective of the child or parent. Statements about "advantages" for which this difference was 15% or more were:

- Parents prefer this arrangement to having a professional interpreter or a member of the school staff acting as translator.

- The child understands what their parents already know and what they need extra explanation about.

Statements about “disadvantages” that met the criterion included:

- The child may feel it is inappropriate to say boastful things about themselves so that they do not translate accurately when teachers praise them or describe their best achievements.

A small number of respondents described other advantages that they saw in these arrangements. The additional advantage that was most often cited by teachers was a saving on costs. One commented: “The truth is that schools are saving a lot of money on bilingual students and teachers.”

Some academic authors and media commentators have expressed concern that the CLB role gives children too much power in relation to their parents. The survey responses indicated that other perceived disadvantages had greater salience for both teachers and ex-CLBs than this concern about “role reversal”. This can be seen in Table 4 where it will be noted that only 44% of teachers and 46% of ex-CLBs expressed agreement or strong agreement with the proposition that acting as a translator “gives children too much power in relation to their parents”. These are much lower proportions than expressed concern about such issues as children having inadequate language skills or needing to deal with sensitive issues.

During the interviews a question about the possible advantages and disadvantages of the CLB arrangements in their school stimulated extensive responses from both teachers and ex-CLBs. More participants contributed to the themes related to this question than to any other similar question. The themes are set out in Table 5 below. Many of the perceived advantages and disadvantages apply equally to situations where a child is acting as a language broker for their own parents and situations where they act as Young Interpreters translating for others. Some, however, relate to the dynamics within an individual family and apply specifically to the child who is language brokering for their own parents.

**Table 5 Advantages and disadvantages when a child acts as language broker for their own parents**

		<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Current	Efficiency	<p>There are cost savings.</p> <p>The timing can be more flexible.</p> <p>Child is familiar with the dialect that is required</p>	<p>There is a greater risk of translation errors than with an adult speaker or a professional interpreter.</p> <p>The child may distort what is said for their own reasons.</p>
	Family preference and impact on family life	<p>Parents trust in the child's understanding of their concerns and commitment to their interests.</p> <p>The discussion is confidential and family affairs are kept within the family.</p>	<p>An excessive time commitment may be required from the child.</p> <p>This experience cuts across the child's usual power relations with their siblings.</p>
Future	Impact on school life	<p>The child may be able to enhance their c.v.</p> <p>Skills and knowledge that are often undervalued are given explicit official recognition and also appreciated by some peers.</p>	<p>The child loses time on their own studies.</p> <p>There may be potential tensions with some peers afterwards.</p> <p>This experience cuts across the child's usual power relations with their peers.</p> <p>The child may feel stigmatized as having an unfavourable background.</p>
	Impact on child's language development	<p>There are improvements in the use of both English and home languages for formal purposes and unfamiliar subject areas.</p> <p>They are challenged to extend their skills in managing a conversation, most notably in taking account of the perspective of other participants.</p>	
	Impact on child's social development	<p>The child's confidence is enhanced.</p> <p>The child is stimulated to adopt a mature perspective on aspects of school life.</p> <p>The child is empowered in the school setting.</p>	

### 3.4 Whose interests do children serve when they act as LBs in schools?

The fourth research question was - how do teachers and ex-CLBs perceive CLBs in terms of their alignment with family or personal interests as against detached, independent values of translation and interpreting?

As we indicated in the Introduction, the use of the term “language broker” is intended to make it clear that the individual in this role is not independent, impersonal and detached in the way that a professional interpreter aspires to be. When parents ask their children to act as language brokers on their behalf, they are explicitly looking for support. The question arises: in what ways are CLBs seen as aligned with family or personal interests as against detached, independent values of translation and interpreting?

In the survey our first step in examining this issue was to ask respondents to report on how child language brokers approach the translation task. They were presented with a series of 16 very short vignettes describing how an imagined CLB used to operate. Table 6 summarises the responses of teachers and ex-CLBs to a subset of those vignettes that referred directly to how CLBs approach the translation task. We noted that:

- In response to the vignette of Pedro, a slightly higher proportion of ex-CLBs than of teachers saw themselves as having made exact word for word translations
- Responding to the vignettes of Mandeep and Tolu, higher proportions of teachers than of ex-CLBs assumed that what was said in the meetings they observed was paraphrased either to achieve effective understanding or to save time.
- In response to the vignettes of Nawal, Marcella and Kamamba, the majority of both teachers and ex-CLBs remembered a commitment on the part of CLBs to explain aspects of school to their parents and to sort out any misunderstandings. In both groups the proportions who recalled CLBs glossing over misunderstandings because of embarrassment were much smaller.
- The vignettes about family teamwork and role reversal gave inconsistent results. In response to the vignette on Mohammed more teachers than ex-CLBs reported on family teamwork during CLB meetings, but they were also more likely to recall CLBs behaving like Rumana and giving the impression of being in charge and of the parents being like children in the situation.

**Table 6 Responses to vignette descriptions of how a CLB might approach the task**

<b>Statement set out in the survey questionnaire</b>	<b>Teachers<sup>i</sup></b>	<b>Ex-CLBs<sup>ii</sup></b>
Pedro believed it was important to make an exact word for word translation of what the teacher and his parents said	61%	72%
Mandeep did not translate every word as she felt it was most important to explain to the person listening what she believed the person talking was trying to say	83%	57%
Tolu gave a short version of what was said so as not to waste everyone's time	79%	54%
When a teacher said something that Nawal did not quite understand, she always asked for an explanation so as to get it right in her home language	77%	72%
When a teacher said something that Marcela did not quite understand, she often felt embarrassed and pretended she has grasped what was meant	36%	33%
Mohammed and his parents operated like a team together when he was translating for them at school	78%	50%
When Maria was translating, she used to hide things from her parents that she did not want them to hear.	36%	37%
When Kamamba was translating at school, he used to explain to his parents how the curriculum worked and what the school expected of him.	63%	59%
When Rumana was translating for her parents at school, she seemed to be in charge and they were like children.	48%	33%
When Danh was translating for his parents at school, they were always in charge and he followed their lead.	62%	58%

<sup>i</sup> The proportion of respondents who responded 'that is like some (or most) of those I have observed'

<sup>ii</sup> The proportion of respondents who responded 'that was very (or quite) like I used to be'.

The interviews provided an opportunity to explore the apparently divergent perspectives of the teachers and ex-CLBs in more depth. We were interested not only in their perceptions of the behaviour of language brokers at school but also in what they thought motivated them to act as they did. Table 7 presents the main themes that emerged from this part of our enquiry in the interviews. In the right hand column it will be noted most of the illustrations relating to positive motivations are from ex-CLBs while most of those relating to negative motivations are from teachers. This reflected the balance of comments that the two groups made on the subject. This table focuses on the situation in which children are translating for their own parents. There were fewer observations relating to Young Interpreters who translate for adults outside their own family. These made some reference to the temptation to gloss over things they found it difficult to translate, but the main focus was on the motivation to translate accurately. One ex-CLB saw this in terms of the need to respect others' ownership:

*And then when there's other people's stuff you can't really mess around with it because it's their stuff, it's just like, you're just here to translate, not to mess with their stuff. (Isabel, ex-CLB)*

**Table 7 Motivation to translate accurately for one's parents or modify what is said**

<b>Language brokering for one's own family: motivation to translate accurately</b>	
Will be found out if you lie	<p><i>I've never done that because it's like, for example if it was Parents Evening and I was translating for my mum and I was like oh yeah I did great in school, somehow you know people are going to find out. So I'm just like might as well tell them now that I'm not doing that well, than just lie and then they find out later that I wasn't doing that well. (Isabel, ex-CLB)</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, I was always honest! I don't know, maybe the teacher would notice that I would like to my parents so, I don't know....or my parents would notice that I was lying to them (Kara, ex-CLB)</i></p>
Recognise a moral obligation and will have it on your conscience	<p><i>I can't, people are always like oh just lie to your mum, it's ok, she won't understand but I find it kind of wrong because you have it on your conscience that you lied to your mum and that you know somehow your parents always find out, so yeah. (Isabel, ex-CLB)</i></p> <p><i>Well, I had to be honest anyway. So I had to tell them what the teacher told me. So it was awkward, but I had to tell them. They had to know....and I don't want to live with this guilt of lying to my parents and my teacher at the same time, so that's why I prefer to be honest all the time. (Kara, ex-CLB)</i></p>

<b>Language brokering for one's own family: motivation to alter what is said or put a gloss on it</b>	
Self-presentation	<i>The child is going to want to present themselves in the best possible light in front of their parents. (Laura, teacher)</i>
Avoid making parents sad or angry	<p><i>I try to tell her exactly what she says, but positively, like not negatively. I'd use positive words and vocabs... Because she, she, I don't want her to get sad, mad. Like in the work I do they said don't tell people like don't try, say work, I use that kind of thing, use positive. (Karim, ex-CLB)</i></p> <p><i>I think there's an ulterior motive if you're sometimes talking to a parent, brokering for a parent, because you don't want to seem, depending on the subject, you don't want to let down or disappoint your parents in any way but you also don't want to, you want to impress your teacher as well. I think that's a certain thing for that as well so I think it's very different... because I think you've got other feelings that are getting in the way with all three parties involved, it's almost that, that weight of it is on that child that's translating and they're having to read people's faces, they're trying to save their own skin at the same time, I think it's very complicated. (Nicole, teacher)</i></p>
Avoid trouble	<i>I think the student was maybe watering it down a little so that maybe they didn't get into too much trouble when they got home. Not that that was what I wanted either but sometimes they can say it maybe in a better way or in a different way so parents understand but then I won't get into a lot of trouble when I'm at home and not at school. (Amy, teacher)</i>
Imply that the school supports or requires something that is a personal preference	<i>And then I've often found that some children have their own agenda. For example, with the trip, it wasn't this child but we did have another child who desperately wanted her parents to buy a costume so they told the parents that they had to buy a costume, so there's always that worry. (Hannah, teacher)</i>
Gloss over difficult words	<i>I remember a few occasions where the student was trying to translate the right thing but they didn't have the vocabulary so they started changing things. But I don't think that was their conscious plan to sort of change the message, it was rather I don't have the tools, I don't know the words so I'll try changing things. (Jedrek, teacher)</i>

Isha, an ex-CLB who was born in the UK to parents who had come here from Bangladesh, directly addressed the question of how she conceived her main aim as a CLB:

*I mean obviously as I grew older I became more fluent within my mother language but I think it was ok. Because it wasn't, I wasn't really there as like, like I've said, you know, I interpret, it's not, it's something I do professionally now but back then it's more just covering what I had to cover rather than, I'm not there as a translator if that makes sense. I knew I was like the*

*student and I was just helping my mum out more than anything, I wasn't even really that fussed about the head teacher getting her message across, I just want to make mum, my mum understand, if that makes sense.*

### 3.5 How ex-CLBs felt about their LB experiences

The fifth research question was - what views do ex-CLBs now have of their experience of the process, their own agency, competence and effectiveness and how the process was facilitated or obstructed by the actions and attitudes of their teachers?

#### 3.5.1 Ex-CLBs' overall experience of acting as a language broker at school

In the survey a majority of ex-CLBs' gave a generally positive evaluation of their experience in this role: almost three quarters identified with a vignette character who was proud of translating for her parents and just over half agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I enjoyed translating in school". However, for a substantial minority the experience had not been free of problems:

- 33% had found it embarrassing.
- 42% had found it stressful.
- 21% had felt angry when they had to translate in school.

A series of survey questions explored whether or not they felt comfortable in this role and what factors affected those feelings. This issue was covered with the teachers as well as the ex-CLBs, but here we are concerned only with the views expressed by the ex-CLBs.<sup>4</sup> Overall 83% of ex-CLBs reported that they had sometimes or often felt comfortable translating for their parents at school, and 63% reported that they had sometimes or often felt uncomfortable. A series of questions in the survey focused on what had made respondents feel comfortable or uncomfortable during a CLB episode. As can be seen in Table 8 below, the most common reasons for their having felt comfortable in the role were personal - a sense of usefulness and competence. The most common sources of a sense of discomfort, on the other hand, related to contextual factors in school - because it was unusual in their school or it made them stand out from others. The ways in which these factors operated were described in more detail during their interviews by ex-CLBs. Their accounts of the processes are discussed in the next three sections. It will be seen that, when respondents tried to explain the roots of their sense of comfort or discomfort, they tended to highlight the role that their teachers could play.

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<sup>4</sup> The teachers' responses to this series of questions are discussed in Section 5.4 below, and an analysis of the similarities and differences between the views of the two groups is considered in a separate paper (Cline, Crafter and Prokopiou, 2014).



**Table 8** What made CLBs feel comfortable or uncomfortable when acting as a language broker at school

When I have felt <i>comfortable</i> translating at school, it was because:	Ex-CLBs <sup>i</sup>
I felt I was doing something useful	96%
I understood the issues that were being discussed	87%
I thought my home language was good enough	77%
I thought my English was good enough	75%
It was valued by people there	73%
My teacher made it easy for me	64%
It was normal in our school	45%
Lots of my friends did it	27%
When I have felt <i>uncomfortable</i> translating at school, it was because:	
Most pupils' parents spoke English	76%
It made me stand out from others	68%
It was unusual in our school	57%
Because the issue that was discussed was sensitive	45%
My teacher did not make it easy for me	30%
It was not appreciated by people around me	29%
I thought my home language was not good enough	25%
I thought my English was not good enough	20%
I did not understand some of the issues that were being discussed	19%

<sup>i</sup> The proportion of ex-CLBs who responded 'agree' to each statement

### 3.5.2 The impact of language brokering on students' sense of identity

40% of survey respondents reported that they had sometimes or often felt *comfortable* translating for their parents at school and also had sometimes or often felt *uncomfortable*. It appears that their feelings about language brokering at school were complex and nuanced, and this was confirmed during the interview phase of the study (Table 9). One source of the complexity was that ex-CLBs remembered their feelings changing over time. For example, anxiety about being able to do what was required would reduce with growing knowledge of English and increasing experience of the brokering process. It seemed clear that some young people had been put in the position of having to translate rather sooner after their arrival in the UK than was comfortable for them. But even when they were confident in their ability to perform the task, the fact that they needed to do so set them apart from most of their peers. In schools where there were relatively few children from bilingual backgrounds that could made them feel awkward and embarrassed. For some reflecting back during the research interview seemed almost to have a therapeutic value. Kara, an ex-CLB, concluded:

*It sounds like now more normal for me and it has refreshed my memory, how crazy I was when I was a child and I kind of feel ashamed that I was actually embarrassed about my parents.*

**Table 9      Complex feelings about the responsibilities of acting as a language broker**

<p><b>It is possible to be proud of one's language skills and at the same time worried and tense in case they are not good enough for the task</b></p>
<p><i>I felt like a new part of me, like something that is not me, but I felt like good about me, you know, when I go to people, oh I can speak English, I know how to do this and yeah I feel happy about myself but then there's, there was moments I said the wrong things and then just people will laugh at me like, you know, I say the wrong past tense and the present tense so I'm just like oh I can't do this and I was like no you know what I can do this. And like there's moments I'm just like oh I wish I can speak English fluently and really well but, but there's moments I feel good that I know English, so. (Nathaly, ex-CLB recalling the first time she had translated for her parents at school aged 10-11)</i></p> <p><i>Well sometimes like at the beginning it was kind of hard because like I would think in Spanish so it was just like I will have to translate from English to Spanish in my head for me to be able to understand. But then now I've kind of balanced everything so when I'm in a Spanish lesson I will just understand that and I will black out, like just take out all the English and when I'm in normal lesson where they speak English I'll just forget about Spanish... Well the first time I interpreted for my mum it was kind of hard because like I was new in the country, I was like, I knew a bit of English because my dad's half American but it was kind</i></p>

*of hard because here you use different words for different things so I was just like oh God. But it was fun, like I, it was actually like really nice and then I got confident and then I just kept doing it and I even do it for other people as well now. It's fun. (Isabel, ex-CLB)*

**Translating for others is normal and being able to do it is an asset  
but having to do it means that you are perceived as different by others**

*I think for me it was quite normal especially when I was in Holland, like most of the people there I associated myself with, they were in the same situation as I was. But when I came to the UK I had more of a mixed group of friends and when I would tell them like if they send me a letter from school, normally you have to fill in like your details and stuff like that, I fill it in myself. And I told one of my friends and she's British and she was shocked. So that's when I realised that, because for me it's normal because I've been doing it all my life and the people I associate with, it's normal for them, but she was shocked. And I was thinking about it, like oh I was not supposed to, it's not something that's normal, so that, I felt a bit shocked but I don't really mind. (Angelica, ex-CLB)*

*I felt smart, gifted and possibly embarrassed because it like, the first two are really positive but the last probably because it can be really embarrassing to sort of like have to translate and everyone's just like staring at you. And as a child you're sort of I think probably maybe more self-conscious so just kind of like oh my gosh all these people are staring at me, it's like they've never heard another language before so it did make me quite like embarrassed because it's like oh my God, yeah... In a way I felt sort of smart because my school, it was full of English people; so for me to have all these languages I felt sort of, in a way you could say talented. But it also did feel a bit weird because like all these other kids were like oh my God what's she saying (Celia, Ex-CLB)*

**What is "normal" in one school is "different" in another**

*Yeah because like there's loads of people here that don't speak English, well their parents don't speak English so it's kind of like they (the teachers) are just used to it so it's like yeah. For example like there's loads of Hispanic people here, Portuguese, African. (Isabel, ex-CLB, who came from Colombia to the UK when she was 12 years old speaking Spanish as her first language and some Portuguese)*

*I think for me it was quite normal especially when I was in Holland, like most of the people there I associated myself with, they were in the same situation as I was. But when I came to the UK I had more of a mixed group of friends and when I would tell them like if they send me a letter from school, normally you have to fill in like your details and stuff like that, I fill it in myself. And I told one of my friends and she's British and she was shocked. So that's when I realised that, because for me it's normal because I've been doing it all my life and the people I associate with, it's normal for them, but she was shocked.*

*And I was thinking about it, like oh I was not supposed to, it's not something that's normal, so that, I felt a bit shocked but I don't really mind. (Angelica, ex-CLB, who was born to West African immigrant parents in the Netherlands and came to the UK at the age of 13-14)*

**Knowing a particular language does not necessarily imply accepting a group identity**

*And one, one girl, she's Dutch, she doesn't consider herself Somali, she considers herself Dutch and the other student is, was born in Mogadishu and they have absolutely nothing in common apart from the fact that their parents are Somali. And it just, the atmosphere or the, the younger, the girl from Somalia, she, I could tell that she was really sad and she didn't like the fact that the teacher had put her to sit beside this other girl and she had to sit beside her. And I said to the teacher, after a while, I said make it a bigger group or move her away completely, put her to sit beside another girl. And he told me that when he did that, it worked better for her. Because the, the other girl, the one who considers herself, or says she is Dutch, she didn't want to do it, she didn't want to be friends with the other girl, she didn't want to talk to the other girl. (Kina, teacher)*

### **3.5.3 Ex-CLB's sense of control, competence and effectiveness during the process**

Responding to the survey there was support from 50% or more of both teachers and ex-CLBs for the suggestion that the advantages of school language brokering arrangements included:

- The child learns both languages better
- The child comes to understand both cultures better
- The child learns social and communication skills

Reflecting on their own experience just under half of the ex-CLBs reported that translating had helped them learn more of their first language; just over half reported that it had helped them learn English; 68% said that it had made them more confident generally and 75% that it had made them more independent and mature. These judgments about the impact of being involved in CLB activities on future development need to be seen in the context of how they felt about the process at the time. Although many positive comments have been reported above, a significant proportion felt that the difficulties of the task were under-estimated: 48% reported that their parents always assumed they were more competent at translating than they felt, and 66% reported the same of their teachers.

As before, the interview phase of the study confirmed a nuanced picture of the ex-CLBs' perspectives on the activity. Many acknowledged a difficult start but described having come to enjoy the process, taking pride in being able to be useful and also in using skills and having a

status that they had not had before. For example, Amita who had come to the UK from Nepal when she was 11 years old begrudged the time she later gave to fellow students in her role as a buddy for new arrivals but also derived great satisfaction from it:

*Well in some situations it really affected my work because I was too busy helping her rather than helping myself. But in the same thing I felt like I was proud of myself because helping others was a good thing, rather than, like, helping myself, because, you know, yeah. And after that it was cool... it actually developed my self-confidence, it feels, it made me feel like I could do it, I could do it for like other people as well because I know I have been through that so I, I could do something for them.*

A number of our informants gave considerable emphasis to ways in which the experience had changed for them over time. They had felt uncertain of their skills and their control of the situation at the outset but developed confidence in both as they gained experience:

*Yes, I think it's getting better, yeah, and so does my communication skill as well. And also say like in talking with people so like eye contacts and stuff is getting better with me. And I'm not nervous. Like before if you come to me I would be like shaking and stuff but now I'm like more confident, I'm talking to you, I'm fine. Yeah.* (Anamika, a 20 year old who had come from Bengal five years earlier and was now helping in a school as a "Language Ambassador")

*A good thing, it improves yourself as well... It makes you, as you keep on talking, as you keep on translating your like thinking, reaction, gets quicker, it increases it so that's, that's the good thing.* (Sameer, a 16 year old student at a Sixth Form College, who had come to the UK from Nepal at the age of 11)

#### **3.5.4 The facilitation and obstruction of the process by teachers**

In the survey and during the interviews both teachers and ex-CLBs made it clear that they saw the conduct of individual teachers as crucial to the success of meetings and other activities supported by CLBs. The setting and framework provided at school level was also seen as important, and the issues that need to be dealt with at school level are discussed under the heading of Research Question 7 below. Here we are concerned with how individual teachers can facilitate or obstruct the work of CLBs.

In order to understand teachers' management of these situations it is important to have some insight into how they felt about them. Overall 87% of teachers reported that they had sometimes or often felt comfortable asking pupils to translate at school, and 40% reported that they had sometimes or often felt uncomfortable. As with the ex-CLBs (see Table 8 above) we asked teachers who responded to the survey about factors that made them feel comfortable or uncomfortable when they asked pupils to translate at school. Their responses are summarized in Table 10. It will be seen that their sense of comfort with the arrangement depended most on the judgments they made about the complexity and sensitivity of the issues being discussed and the competence of the pupil. Fewer of them highlighted the context provided by the school.

**Table 10 What made teachers feel comfortable or uncomfortable when acting as a language broker at school<sup>i</sup>**

<b>When I have felt <i>comfortable</i> asking pupils to translate at school, it has been because:</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
They feel they are doing something useful	91%
I thought their home language was good enough	88%
I thought their English was good enough	88%
It is valued by people there	82%
I felt they would understand the issues that are being discussed	80%
It is normal in our school	72%
Lots of their friends do it	45%
<b>When I have felt <i>uncomfortable</i> asking pupils to translate at school, it has been because:</b>	
Because the issue that was discussed was sensitive	64%
I felt they would not understand some of the issues that were being discussed	51%
I thought their English was not good enough	35%
It makes them stand out from others	30%
I thought their home language was not good enough	19%
It is unusual in our school	18%
It is not appreciated by people here	12%
Most pupils' parents speak English	12%

<sup>i</sup> The proportion of teachers who responded 'agree' to each statement

In the free comment section of one part of the survey ex-CLBs highlighted the contribution that individual teachers had made to their experience of the process. They had appreciated teachers who made it easy for them, e.g. by speaking “simple English without adding difficult words” and by “pausing in between sentences for me to translate”. The act of translating for another person requires that the three parties form a particular kind of relationship. One individual valued a teacher who “*asked in a nice way*” and another observed that when the teacher was “*talking to my parents he would often look at me too. So he wouldn't exclude me which made me feel like I was part of the talk. He also would offer me extra support.*” Sources of additional discomfort for the ex-CLBs included teachers judging them or not trusting them, home languages being looked down on in the school, and teachers making it clear that they saw this arrangement as difficult. Two of the respondents felt that their parents were slighted. In one case the teacher “*made a big deal out of having me translate and instead of addressing my mother, they addressed me, ignoring my mother*”. In another “*the teacher made no effort to make it easy for my mum. They made me feel like it was an inconvenience. When I was being bullied they never addressed my mother during the meeting. It was only me so it was awkward like I had to explain to my mother about it and it upset me.*” During the interviews respondents’ observations expanded on these points, covering several aspects of meetings with parents and other activities where a teacher’s conduct could have a crucial impact on the atmosphere and the outcome. Their comments covered preparation, pace, nonverbal communication, language and content (see Table 11). Thus they suggested specific things that a teacher can do to facilitate a meeting, but many of their comments referred to another dimension, highlighting the importance that ex-CLBs attached to underlying attitudes of consideration and respect:

*And like maybe some consideration for what they do, and not special treatment, let's say... I guess overall just more understanding.* (Celia, ex-CLB)

*I keep communicating with Miss [Lucia] every day and that's when I start feeling more confident with her and she keeps telling me ah why don't you translate this and I was like oh ok I'll see how it goes. She's like don't worry, I'll be there to check and everything else and I was like ok and then that's when I start feeling more confident.*  
(Nathaly, ex-CLB)

**Table 11 Advice from ex-CLB's on how teachers can facilitate the process in meetings with parents**

Preparation for the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief the CLB before a meeting to agree how it will be managed and explain key terms/issues that they may not be familiar with.</li> <li>Arrange signals for them to give when they need more time to translate or when they don't fully understand what has been said.</li> <li>Be alert for possible gaps in a child's technical vocabulary in their home language and have a dictionary to hand in case of need.</li> </ul>
Pace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set a slow pace and make clear to the CLB that they can work slowly. <i>Speak slowly (so) that I have time to understand what they say and translate for them. (Karim, ex-CLB)</i> <i>When I say something to my mother he just goes like take your time, just take your time, there is no rush... so I feel comfortable that time with my teacher, I feel happy because he understand me what I'm going through, so yeah. (Amita, Ex-CLB)</i></li> </ul>
Nonverbal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain eye contact with both the parents and the CLB. <i>Mainly between them, also me as well because it wouldn't be nice to be ignored. Yeah, but mainly between them because it's them two that actually came to meet each other (Angelica, ex-CLB)</i> <i>Make eye contact with the parents because even though you're using the child translator or whoever, you can make eye contact with your translator but also with the people that you're seeing because often it can be that your conversation, you've forgotten about the parents or whoever's come in or the other student, you're spending all your time with the one that's translating and you need to bring everybody into the conversation, into the mix. (Amy, teacher)</i></li> <li>Make sure that nonverbal signals are encouraging. <i>Patience at that time when you're translating and then having the positive image on your face when doing it because being negative can put everyone off, yeah. (Mina, ex-CLB)</i></li> </ul>
Language and content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modify use of language to the level of the child's understanding and apparent ability to translate. <i>You've got to think very carefully about what you're going to say, what the main message is. And how you can word it so that the child definitely understands the importance of it and also what that main message is. Keep it very simple. ( Hannah, teacher)</i> <i>Some of the teachers are like, they don't know that if you say loads of things together, if I'm going to translate loads of things together I might miss some of the points. So, so some teachers are really good with that, they will break it down like the paragraph say with a couple of sentences which is, which is really good, then they help me to translate which is, which will be really clear for the parents, which is really good. Some teachers, I think they don't realise that they will just say a paragraph and I have to translate that so maybe I miss some points, you know, yeah (Anamika, ex-CLB)</i></li> <li>Plan with care the messages which are to conveyed <i>Make sure first that what you want to say, you have it clear in your mind and maybe written down on paper so you don't miss any points and then you follow on what it is. Don't chop and change from one subject to another, make sure you keep it flowing. (Amy, teacher)</i></li> </ul>



### 3.6 Comparing the views of multilingual and monolingual teachers

The sixth research question was - what differences of view and understanding are there between teachers who are themselves bilingual or multilingual and teachers who are monolingual?

In the survey the substantial minority of teachers who reported that they spoke at least one language other than English fluently, showed a broadly similar pattern of results to those who made no such claim. Where there were small differences between the groups, those who spoke another language tended to express slightly more positive attitudes towards child language brokering in schools. For example, 56% of those who said that they spoke another language fluently reported that they had "often" felt comfortable asking pupils to translate at school while only 41% of those who made no such claim said that they had "often" felt the same.

When asked if they thought parents preferred having their child act as language broker for them rather than a professional interpreter or a member of the school staff, 56% of those who spoke another language fluently indicated strong agreement or agreement that this would be the case, compared with 37% of those who did not speak another language. At the same time teachers who spoke another language fluently were more likely to recognize that acting as a language broker might be stressful with 63% indicating strong agreement or agreement with the proposition that it might "impose excessive responsibility on children so that they feel stressed or anxious" compared to 48% of the "monolingual" teachers.

The interview sample included three bilingual teachers, and their comments to us suggested specific ways in which being bilingual oneself might influence one's observations of the contribution a CLB can make in school. As one might expect, a number of monolingual teachers spoke about similar issues, but the bilingual teachers brought reflections on their own personal experiences to bear on their discussion of aspects of language brokering. For example, in the table below Lucia's experiences as a language broker for her own mother led her to empathise with the embarrassment a CLB can feel. She connected these childhood experiences with her efforts as a school teacher in England to promote bilingual language use as an asset. Jedrek's experiences as a bilingual teacher gave him a depth of understanding of the challenges child language brokers face attempting to bridge different educational systems through their interpreting. Kina situated her own bilingualism as an asset to both monolingual and bilingual children within the classroom.

**Table 12**      **Observations from bilingual teachers about language brokering**

<p>A teacher with experience of being a child language broker herself (Lucia)</p>	<p><i>...as for me, I was bilingual and I always, my mum never spoke to me in Italian, and she spoke to me in German and the fact that she spoke to me in German in Italy I always tried to hide it, because it was for me embarrassing to interpret or to answer back to my mum and it was never until later on that I saw it as an asset. And therefore I thought, I need to recognise the fact that this student has got a language that can, is like an asset for them, and I don't want them to go through the same things that happened to me.</i></p>
<p>Interpreting 'education' and education systems (Jedrek)</p>	<p><i>Just because I do so much translating myself, like I said earlier on, and I, I know how challenging at times that is. So knowing that a girl attended both school in Portugal and in England, it might have been easier for her to, you know, to sort of simplify to mum to make sure that she understands. Because there is a big difference between the educational system in Portugal and in this country so some things even translated word by word don't really make that much sense to some parents.</i></p>
<p>Enhancing the classroom experience for bilingual and monolingual young people (Kina)</p>	<p><i>In, in lessons sometimes we have quite a few Romanian speakers at the moment and we have some, two students, one who is Romanian and another Spanish. And in a particular lesson I had to speak to the Spanish Romanian student, speak to her in Spanish and then get her to interpret into Romanian and there were all these students in the classroom and they just sat there and said ok, right, other British monolingual English-speaking students were saying, so we're in a French lesson and you're speaking to this girl in Spanish, and then she's translating in Romanian and they were like, as if they were in awe. Same year, year 7, 11, 12, and saying 'oh miss, this is really, really good, miss, I need to be, I need to be more serious about learning another language because how comes how is she doing it. So she's telling her what to do in, in French and you're telling her in Spanish miss, so how, how does that work'. And we spent roughly 20 minutes afterwards just talking about that and it made that girl feel really special.</i></p>

### 3.7 Recommendations for improved school practices from teachers and ex-CLBs

The final research question was - what recommendations would current teachers and ex-CLBs make on how to improve schools' policies and practices on CLB activity?

A number of recommendations for good practice by individual teachers have emerged in earlier sections, e.g. on how a teacher can best support a CLB during a three-way meeting (see Table 11 at the end of Section 3.5.4). In this section we will focus on policies and practices at the school level. What suggestions did the teachers and ex-CLBs make and what accounts did they give to explain those views?

#### 3.7.1 Choosing the best person to act as a translator

Should a child or an adult be used to translate in a particular meeting? In the sections above on Research Questions 2 and 3 we reported participants' views on the factors that should be taken into account in making decision. Some of the potentially damaging incidents that were reported appear to have occurred because the school did not have an explicit policy or list of criteria for that decision (e.g. as set out in Table 3 above and in Section 2 of the web-based *Guide to Good Practice*). But, as the accounts from a teacher and an ex-CLB describing an incident in one school in the box below illustrate,, it is not enough to have an agreed statement of criteria for making that decision. In addition, there needs to be an agreed approach to how the decision will be made. In that case the outcome was satisfactory because of the school's firm policy that pupils have the last say on whether they will become involved in language brokering for a meeting or not. But the student would not have been called out of her class at all if the staff in the reception office had had clear guidance at the outset.

#### When Reception Staff have no clear guidance

Emma (Teacher)

*...there's been, there's been occasions where we've wanted to use and we haven't because of the nature of the interview. So for example we had a situation where the police came in to interview one of our students about a drug related incident and we don't have a member of staff that speaks their language and I'd been asked if I knew anybody who spoke this language and could translate and I did find someone who was a sixth former. But I was unaware at the time that the police were involved in this, and then... I was told a translator was needed quite urgently, quite quickly and so*

*I found a sixth former and I took her across to reception and then as it happened she didn't translate for the meeting because of the nature of the meeting and because she's also, although she shares the language she's not part of the religious community that they are and it might, she was a little uncomfortable and we were a little uncomfortable so in the end we didn't use her. So that's probably the most memorable experience of not using a child as a translator rather than of using a child as a translator.*

Anamika (ex-CLB)

*So like once there was a, some problem with the police I think so I choose not to involve myself so yeah, so I told my mum and my mum said yeah that's fine, so she was happy with my decision... They always like, always arrange your time and they will inform you before and they will, they wouldn't take me from a lesson, no, it didn't happen ever, if it's not an emergency I think, it didn't happen.... Yeah, the police one, it was during a lesson time; then I refused to go, yeah. One it was police involvement, another one I didn't want to miss my lesson, but they was fine, they said yeah that's fine... because they have Bengali speaking police as well in their office so they were just going to go there and then, yeah.*

In multilingual schools it is helpful if the task of identifying a suitable adult to act as an interpreter does not rely solely on informal staff knowledge. A key member of staff, who may be an administrator, can act as a reference point, holding a list of staff and outside adults who have additional language skills. Few of the schools represented in the interview sample were reported to hold such a list, but it was planned as an adjunct to the Young Interpreter scheme in one of them:

*I think what I intend to do is make sure that at Reception there's going to be a list of the teachers and the languages that they speak so that if, if we can't get another student to translate, and sometimes they don't want to, they're in a lesson, they don't want to be withdrawn, it's a nice lesson, then we can call on a teacher and if the teacher can't do it there and then at least the information can be translated by that teacher in a letter form and given to where it needs to go to. So it's not always convenient to withdraw students because if they've got a favourite subject they don't want to come out of it. (Amy, teacher)*

### 3.7.2 Involving children and young people: trained Young Interpreters within a formal scheme

Some schools with a multilingual student population have a formal ‘Young Interpreter’ scheme through which student volunteers are used as language brokers for other pupils or their parents. This study was not designed to investigate the training and support of Young Interpreters within such schemes. Young Interpreters with formal training were rarely mentioned in the survey responses as the survey questionnaire focused on informal arrangements when pupils acted as language brokers for members of their own family or for peers in the classroom. But formal schemes were mentioned during the interviews by both teachers and ex-CLBs (some of whom had gained their language brokering experience through such schemes.) The analysis of the interview transcripts indicated that pupils tended to feel more comfortable when taking on this role outside their own age group, specifically with younger pupils. Our interviewees, both teachers and ex-CLBs, respected the arrangements when there were three key components:

- Careful selection of potential participants
- Brief but systematic training
- Regular monitoring.

The scheme might be home-grown or linked to and supported by a local authority or independent agency. The teachers who expressed greatest confidence in their school’s arrangements were linked to the *Hampshire Young Interpreter Scheme*<sup>5</sup>.

### 3.7.3 Involving children and young people: interpreting for parents and family members

This activity was the main focus of the study, and recommendations that our informants made for individual teachers and CLBs have been covered above. They did also discuss what schools could do to set the context for successful parent meetings involving CLBs. These mainly related to the planning of parent meetings and concerned the issues of scheduling, staffing and privacy.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/emtas/goodpractice/ema-hyis.htm>

**Table 13 Advice from participants on how schools can best facilitate parent meetings that are supported by a CLB**

Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow extra time in the schedule for meetings that are supported by a CLB</li> </ul> <p><i>In secondary school it was a little bit of a problem because my mum, when she doesn't understand something she'll ask all the questions needed and sometimes that sort of got in the way because there were all these other students waiting and because at secondary school there's so many more, it did create a bit of tension between me and the teacher because the teacher's like I need to go, you need to go, so you need to explain to your mum or just arrange another meeting. So it was a bit awkward in that sense. (Celia, ex-CLB)</i></p> <p><i>They shouldn't have less time for students when they have parents or anybody translating for them, because with translating it obviously takes more time for you to say in English then translating. And then they're saying things, answering that back to you, giving that message back to you in English, so they need more time. (Mina, ex-CLB)</i></p>
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First-time translators may appreciate working with a familiar teacher (their form tutor) at the outset</li> </ul> <p><i>Because you're more close to your tutor than others... the child won't be shy. (Janak, ex-CLB)</i></p>
Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noting the intense feelings expressed by ex-CLBs about exposure and embarrassment, make a separate private room available for parent meetings supported by a CLB</li> </ul> <p><i>If the parents tell us beforehand that they need an interpreter or if they're going to ask a family friend or an older child, then we can set up a meeting away from everybody else, in a room like this one. (Kina, teacher)</i></p> <p><i>I expect them to provide a room because I always, but that's up to me really, it's up to me really to find the room and see if there's something available... we've got to have the room, we've got to have the security that the parents feel secure, that they don't feel embarrassed that somebody else is listening to them in case they make a mistake. You don't want a reaction to happen, whether it's good or bad, and they can't express themselves properly because the environment's not, not ok. So you want a good environment. (Amy, teacher)</i></p>

## 4. Additional perspectives

The main findings and draft recommendations from the project were presented to a stakeholders' conference, alongside an early draft of the Guide to Good Practice earlier this year. Those present included individuals who had participated in the research, members of the Advisory Group and teachers, researchers and administrators from further afield with an interest in the topic. Their thoughtful comments on the materials highlighted some key issues that had not been brought out by the teachers and ex-CLBs in our sample who had a "grass roots" perspective on CLB activities. These issues included:

- Schools need to provide effective recognition of the value of CLB and YI activities to students in terms of the direct impact on their learning and development. When students perform these duties, they demonstrate mature levels of personal confidence, social empathy, skills in each of their languages and the ability to manage certain aspects of meetings. For the purposes of a portfolio or a reference school staff need to be in a position to describe what the activities are that a child has undertaken and to be able to say as a result what skills and knowledge they have shown. Work on this could find its place within strategic developments promoting employability.
- Formal YI schemes need to be coordinated by a senior teacher within a school who has the status to provide leadership and time allocated to follow through the tasks that are required.
- Schools which have very large numbers of recent immigrants will have different needs from schools where new arrivals from overseas are comparatively infrequent. Each school needs to analyse its own situation in order to clarify the briefing or training requirements of key staff and to determine how best to fit work on communication across languages into a broader school strategy on the development and use of communication skills by staff and pupils.
- Ultimately, members of the conference were agreed, a requirement for worthwhile developments in the support of child language brokering in schools will be a broader school ethos in which children's home languages are valued and celebrated.

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